66
5
y 1

E 666
.C55
Copy 1

THE TWO REBELLIONS!

A FEW WORDS

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY THE HON. C. F. ADAMS,

ETC. ETC.

TOUCHING HIS HEREDITARY RELATIONS

TO

REBELLION,

FROM ONE

WHO LIKE HIMSELF IS THE GRANDSON

OF AN

AMERICAN REBEL.

BY R. S. H. CHURCH.

"Handy-dandy! Which is the justice, which is the thief?"—*Shakespeare.*

LONDON:
WILLIAM RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY. W.
1865.

Price Sixpence.

E666
.C55

63350
.05

The original of the Letter now in print, was forwarded by post to Mr. Adams some weeks ago, but has not been in any way acknowledged. A friend has chosen to publish it. A little matter has been added.

R. S. H. C.

Lime Tree Cottage, The Moor, Uxbridge.
Friday, May 12th, 1865.

Sir,

The grandson of Philip Schuyler, and nephew of Alexander Hamilton, needs offer, he believes, no apology at this melancholy crisis, for addressing himself to the grandson of John Adams.

We have each of us in childhood sat on the knee of one, or the other, of these eminent men,—fellow labourers through a mighty toil to a successful end —we have both of us been taught to look back with affectionate interest on their deeds, to feel proud of having in our veins the blood of men who, by their daring and their genius, set in action by their sense of duty, converted a rebel Colony into a free and independent State. It is under the privilege of my kinship to two of these men, and in invoking their memory, that I take leave to address you.

You have lately felt it your duty, in consequence of a most deplorable event, to make an address to your fellow countrymen then present in London. The topic on which you had to speak was doubtless a most painful and exciting one.

That best friend of a bad cause, the assassin, had just been at work.

It is the enormous evil, and fatal blunder of this accursed crime, that for a time, and that a very

critical one, it purifies and exalts the *victim*, and throws a halo around his instruments. Assassinate the Devil, and there will be instantly a rush of sympathy towards his imps.

A great criminal is struck at, escapes or falls; men hasten to his levée or his tomb; they do it merely as a protest against crime, it has the present effect of passing for a homage to virtue. I have myself experienced a temporary reaction, caused by the extreme indignation with which I was fired, at this most detestable of crimes.

That under such circumstances you should have spoken with heat, or overabounded with eulogy, or execration, would have been natural, and in this case it would not have been fair to have criticized you. But nothing of the kind appears; it is manifest that in your speech, every word has been carefully selected, every opinion carefully delivered. The victim becomes anything but a hero, whose loss is irremediable. On the spot where the emotion was intense, the American Eagle was craped to the very tip of its beak, its talons alone unhampered, and sharpened for immediate domestic use. Not a brick was there to be seen uncovered in its cities, so draped their houses with funeral trappings and devices, and an ostentatious pageantry of woe, such, as in 1852, I saw at Boston on the occasion of a Statesman's death, who, had he been living, would have rendered Mr. Lincoln, and his Cabinet impossible.

But though the grief be intense, the loss you calmly assure us is trifling; save that, with singular inconsistency and irreverence, you say that Lincoln's memory will rank close to that of Washington's, your appreciation of his political value is singularly tame. On him, despite his prominent position amid a great catastrophe, you tell us no responsibility rests. He but did as he was bid; the sovereign people "designated their wishes, and were emphatically obeyed." A good and faithful servant has been removed, and that is all.

You kneel with the rest of your countrymen at Lincoln's tomb, but it is clear that your hero is not the dead lion, but the living one; it is on the new "Abdiel," as you style him, that your thoughts are fixed; it is clear you do not believe that *he* will be a servant. As he came drunk into the Vice-Presidency, so he comes savage into the Presidency; but your theory of "designation" has passed away; you do not wait to hear how the sovereign people will receive his words of blood or confiscation, whether or not they will reverse their policy of clemency at his bidding. "Abdiel" has spoken; and it is now the country, you think, which will implicitly obey. In trim and classic phrase you tell us, "it may be that *he* will give greater prominence to the image of justice than to that of mercy, in dealing with notorious offenders; it may be, that in *his* policy he may display a little more of sternness gathered from the severity of his own trials," that is derived from his

own personal resentments. It is he, manifestly, who will give the tone to the sovereign people, not they who will "designate" it to him. Good reason have we then to be alarmed. "Treason," says Mr. Andrew Johnson, "is the greatest of crimes, and traitors must be punished!" Gracious Heavens! is it possible that you of all men, can with bended knee hail the advent of such a man, and such a policy, and without a shudder, prepare the ears of Englishmen for the announcement of some imperial ukase big with violence and confiscation?*

Treason, the worst of crimes! says an American President; why, it is as if William of Normandy had proclaimed, "that bastardy was the foulest of pedigrees, and that bastards should be punished." Treason no doubt is a great crime; but Hampden in England, and Washington and Hamilton in America, thought there was a greater, that namely, of compelling men by misgovernment, disregard of contracts, contempt of rights, and arbitrary excesses to have recourse to treason. Now, Sir, before you consent to hand over the reputation of these men, to one, who from being the furious champion of slavery, has become a furious persecutor of slaveholders,—before you consent to sully an honourable name, by continuing to be the servant of such a man and policy, I beseech of you in all earnestness, and by our interest in the fame of those from whom we

* The Ukase has appeared since this was written—was manifestly expected. It is worthy of the worst days of Russia.

descend, to give your most serious attention to certain passages I propose to offer you from American history.

Let me first carry you back to the year 1775. The rebellion is proceeding, the agitation is extreme. The fearful alternative of separation (secession) from the Mother Country is troubling men's minds, cannot, as yet, find its way to their lips. The Members of Convention are in session at Philadelphia. Stern men at a stern work. Among them is one man whom his colleagues manifestly shun. Yet, among them, none is more respectable, or respected; a delegate from a leading Eastern State, worthy both on public and private grounds, of the highest consideration. And who is this man? he is one who plunged into the war of independence, that is into the great American rebellion, with an ardour, a courage, and inflexibility of purpose, unsurpassed by any. Believing in his conscience that separation was the only satisfactory solution of the difficulty, he did not pause to weigh the almost imponderable particles of political casuistry, or to examine with anything like a microscopic conscience the nature of his obligations as a colonist to the parent State.

While Washington, just appointed to the command of the continental levies, was with scrupulous loyalty deprecating hostile collision with the Crown, and persisting in regarding the soldiers opposed to him as those of the Minister, not of the King, this man, impatient for a rupture, was exhorting to

violence, and war. The hottest secessionist of the South of this day might envy his precipitancy, and look upon that man as a model, who disclaimed all parley, "and regarded powder and artillery" as the only negociators proper to be employed. Why then, at the period we are speaking of, is this man shunned? Because, while the boldest are still shrinking from *whispering* the word separation, he has just *thundered* it forth, in tones which at first terrify the timid, and disgust the prudent, but which finally growing familiar to every ear, and finding an echo in every heart, will everywhere be recognized as the proper emphasis, in which an indignant, and injured Nation should speak. And who then is this man? John Adams. Your own grandfather, John Adams. Fame has placed a laurel round his brow; is it for his grandson to tear it thence, and throw it at Andrew Johnson's feet? I will not insult him by supposing it possible.

In thus bringing to your recollection the earnest patriot, as his countrymen styled him—the hot-headed rebel, as the oppressors of his country called him—I have surely given you some reason for not too hastily endorsing Presidential tirades against treason, or threats of vengeance against traitors. I will now proceed to show you that you are equally bound to use extreme caution how you sanction this charge of treason.

Let me fix your attention on an occurrence in the House of Representatives in the year 1810. The

subject before the House was the proposition to erect the Orleans territory into a state. A distinguished member—the uncompromising opponent of slavery—sternly denounced the project, and in the vehemence of his indignation, declared that it was a virtual dissolution of the Union, which made it the right of all *as it would become the duty of many*, to prepare definitively *for separation, amicably, if they might, forcibly, if they must.* The attention of the Speaker having been called to these words, he decided, "that to speak of the act in question as a virtual dissolution of the Union was admissible, but that when he declared that it was the duty of certain States under a certain contingency to separate peaceably, if they might, forcibly, if they must, he was out of order." Hereupon the member appealed from the Speaker to the House, and the House by a majority of 56 to 53 reversed his decision, "many of the Democrats," observes Hildreth, "voting with the Federalists."

We have here the remarkable fact of the House of Representatives deliberately affirming it was no treason to assert that it was not only the privilege, but also the duty, of every State that believed the constitution violated, to go out of the Union. And who was this member who thus victoriously announced this theory of State privilege? John Quincy Adams—your father, John Quincy Adams. Has this lesson also been lost upon you? Has the madness of the times so far infected you, or love of

office so far disordered you, that you are prepared not only to turn from your grandfather with abhorrence as a traitor, but also from your father as an utterer of treason.

Remember, too, it was not merely in a moment of excitement the venerable ex-President expressed these memorable opinions. Again I shift the scene to 1839, and recall him to you when addressing the Historical Society of New York, met to celebrate the jubilee of the Constitution. His words were these :—

"With these qualifications (conscience) we may admit the same right to be vested in the people of every State in the Union, with reference to the general government which was exercised by the people of the American colonies with reference to the supreme head of the British Empire, of which they formed a part, and under these limitations has the government of each State a right to secede from the Confederation itself."

Reflect, I beseech you, on these words of the Patriarch Statesman, addressing himself to a Northern audience, assembled to do honour to the Constitution of the United States. And no one better than yourself knows that this language is in perfect conformity with that of the leading framers of the Constitution, Hamilton and Madison, when speaking in Convention. You well know, too, that the doctrine of State-rights, pushed to the utmost, was the cunning and captivating device by means of which the

great ulta-democrat, Thomas Jefferson, over-rode the influence of Washington and Hamilton. You are well aware too that this doctrine, which, under the management of this ambitious intriguer, became the creed of the majority, found its chief support in the South, and, for a while, its chief opposition in the Eastern States. You could, I dare say, repeat those famous "Kentucky Resolutions," in which the model man of the American republic distinctly asserted the right of any State to go out of the Union whenever it was so inclined. And you must well remember how consistently he adhered to it in 1814, when the Eastern States, repudiating their previous policy, seemed to be preparing either for going over to, or making a separate peace with, the enemy. While Madison, believing they were going, was, in a state of great alarm, eating his words uttered when in the act of framing the Constitution, Jefferson contented himself with quietly saying, "let them go." And unless my memory much deceives me, you yourself have given us evidence that all these precedents had fully wrought their effect in you. For, if I recollect rightly, on your accepting office under Mr. Lincoln, you suggested, in your farewell letter to your constituents, separation as a mode of putting an end to the great schism between the North and South.

That despite, then, the examples set you by those for whom you have ever felt a profound respect, despite the early lessons which you your-

self must have received from the eloquent advocate of the right of secession, your own father, despite your own assent to this teaching up to a late period, you should have been the faithful servant of a Government which, in contempt of all authorities and all theories, has scourged secession with fire and sword, has long been a matter of painful surprise to me, and they may one day be to you a source of deep remorse. The past cannot be recalled, it may be at least partially atoned. The South crushed, not in fair and manly fight, not by the North single handed, but aided by swarms of foreign mercenaries, is completely overwhelmed. A cry for vengeance volunteered by the President, and made acceptable to the people, it is to be feared, by the recent catastrophe, has gone forth. Now then, is the moment when recovering your respect for your household gods you should refuse to uphold the character of the present administration by your honourable name ; when you should return to your fellow citizens to disarm their revenge, and lead them to a clement use of their unfair victory. Withdraw from a post in which, through your descent, your character, your acquirements and your manners, you are made use of as a blind to deceive the English people, as to the description of persons who are now thrown up into the public service of your country. Looking at you, their old associations are undisturbed, and they find nothing that is not consonant with the best days of the Re-

public. Sore need have they then of the presence of one who will better represent the official type of the day, and who will bring vividly to their consciousness the full significance of the change which has taken place between the days of Washington and those of Andrew Johnson.

But above all, fly, I beseech you, to the aid of the black man.* The hour of his extreme peril may be at hand. For if fanatical benevolence should suddenly lift him from childish dependence to adult responsibility, should force him who never has had need to care for the morrow, to win his bread amid the conflict of labour, there will be ghastlier scenes in that unhappy South, than history has ever yet portrayed. There will be hundreds of thousands destroyed by famine, or swept off by disease, thousands driven by despair or discontent into revolt, cut down by the liberating sword.† Great and good service would it be to stay this threatened plague, which you and others have brought upon the land.

* Now that the North is invited and can hardly refuse, to accept the Negro as a fellow elector at the poll, I suppose I shall give no offence by calling him a man. This would not have been the case a day or two ago, when public feeling in the North would not admit him as a fellow passenger in an omnibus! In the old world Ambition has had its wars on a frightful scale—so has Fanaticism. In the new world they have been both outdone in this respect by Hypocrisy.

† The mischief is already at work. By the last accounts we learn that a black regiment has threatened to fire on its officers, and that the ominous order has been published to suspend the issue of arms to the coloured troops.

And this accomplished, or attempted, if you have enough of life and energy left, there is another great work of emancipation before you, of less doubtful value than the first. There is the task of emancipating the intelligence of your country from the grasp of its ignorance, of endeavouring in the political arrangements for the future to find some check upon the crush and despotism of numbers, and of proceeding to reconstruct the somewhat limited republic bequeathed you by your forefathers, by first destroying the unlimited rabbledom with which you have been cursed by your contemporaries.

This would be a noble task and is a needful one. While, in this country, ignorant persons of great pretensions have been drawing fancy sketches of American progress, the decay of American liberty has been on the spot the surprise of many a foreigner, and the lament of many a citizen. A cry of distress has gone up from your own New-England home. A voice from the watch-tower has long since given warning—the voice of one whose memory is cherished with respect and reverence, both in England and America:—I allude to him who has been called the illustrious Channing. It is well that Englishmen should hear, and that you should be reminded of, his touching and melancholy plaint.

"Not long ago I received a letter from a fervent and enlightened friend of liberty in Great Britain, beseeching me to inform him how far he was to rely on one of his own countrymen, just returned from

the United States, who had reported to him that, again and again he had in the most respectable society been told that the experiment of freedom was here a failure, and that faith in our institutions was gone. That the traveller misinterpreted, *in a measure*, what he heard we shall all acknowledge. But is the old enthusiasm unchilled among us? Is the old jealousy of power as keen and uncompromising? Do not parties more unscrupulously encroach on the constitution, and the rights of minorities? In one respect we must all admit a change. When you and I grew up, what a deep interest pervaded this country in the success of free institutions abroad! With what throbbing hearts did we follow the struggles of the oppressed. How many among us were ready to lay down our lives for the cause of liberty on earth! And now who cares for free institutions abroad? How seldom does the topic pass men's lips! *Multitudes, discouraged, by the licentiousness at home, doubt the value of popular institutions,* especially in less enlightened countries, while greater numbers, locked up in gain, can spare no thought on the struggles of liberty; and provided they can drive a prosperous trade with foreign nations, care little whether they are bound or free. I may be thought inclined to draw a dark picture of our moral condition. But at home I can sit down among those who hope against hope; and I have never ceased to condemn as a crime the de-

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 013 785 616 5

spondency of those, who, lamenting the corruption of the times, do not lift a finger to withstand it."

It is impossible to read these memorable words without feeling that Channing's apprehensions were greater than he chose to express. What would he say now? But we need not his voice to tell us that liberty in these days, is in far sorer straits from the misrule of American demagogues, than it ever was in our forefathers' days from the misrule of British statesmen. Fly then, grandson of John Adams, fly to the rescue. There is before you, I repeat, a most noble task, and a most needful one.

At all events that you should at once disconnect your name, suggestive of great deeds and great men, from that vile Government which is an insult to those who achieved American independence and founded the American Union, who, once denounced as rebels, will for ever live in history as patriots, is the earnest prayer of one who, like yourself, is a kinsman of some of them.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

R. S. H. CHURCH.

To his Excellency,
Hon. C. F. Adams,
&c. &c.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 013 785 616 5
R.S.